

STAT

NEW YORK TIMES
22 November 1984ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-3

Rebel Reports No Sandinista Buildup

By JOEL BRINKLEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 21 — The chairman of the largest anti-Sandinista rebel force says his troops have seen little evidence of the major buildup of Soviet arms in Nicaragua that Reagan Administration officials have described.

In an interview, Adolfo Calero, head of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, said that "the only things we have seen in the field so far are the same weapons they have used for many months."

In recent weeks, Reagan Administration officials have talked of unprecedented shipments of arms to Nicaragua from the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries.

Earlier this month, Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger said the Russians had been supplying "a great deal of heavy offensive arms to Nicaragua."

Administration officials said the equipment included helicopter gunships, patrol boats, surface-to-air missiles and other air-defense systems, along with new artillery and ammunition.

'Intent on Militarizing'

Secretary of State George P. Shultz said Nov. 10: "The Nicaraguans seem intent on militarizing their society and accumulating a level of weapons and armed capability that is entirely outside the standpoint of any conceivable defensive mission."

But Mr. Calero, who says his 15,000 troops in Nicaragua frequently engage Government forces, said the only new weapon his men had seen was a multiple grenade launcher that is a more sophisticated version of a launcher that Nicaraguan troops have been using for a long time.

"This one is computerized," Mr. Calero said. Otherwise, he said, "they have the same rifles and grenades they have been using. And they have been using 105- and 120-millimeter cannons."

Nonetheless, Mr. Calero said he and other rebels intended to cite the purported arrival of new Soviet arms when they lobby Congress in January to renew aid to the rebels.

Congress cut off aid last spring but approved \$14 million in new aid for this

fiscal year, which began Oct. 1. At the same time, however, Congress stipulated that the funds could not be spent unless Congress renewed approval after March 1.

Lobbying Effort Planned

Mr. Calero, who said he was in Washington to visit supporters, said he and other rebel officers intended to begin lobbying members of Congress in January.

"I am going to talk to all the liberal Democrats," he said, naming five or six members of the House leadership, many of whom have opposed aid. "I am going to see as many as I can see."

Mr. Calero said his troops were particularly worried about the MI-24 attack helicopters that Administration officials said were unloaded from a Soviet freighter at the Nicaraguan port of Corinto this month. The copters are heavily armored Soviet assault gunships often equipped with missiles, cannons and machine guns. Mr. Calero said his troops had no weapons that could effectively counter them.

"They are going to be a menace," he said, adding: "What if those helicopters come and kill 2,000 of our men? They could do it; they have tremendous destructive capability."

He added that "that blood would be on the conscience" of the congressman "who cut off our aid."

Donations From Individuals

Since the American aid was ended last spring, Mr. Calero said, the rebels have received many donations from individuals in the United States and other countries. Over the last several months, rebel leaders have estimated the total to be \$1.5 million to \$10 million, only a fraction of the aid the rebels had received from the United States Government. Through last May, the rebels had received at least \$80 million in American aid.

"We are getting enough to sustain ourselves, but not enough to take on major offensive," Mr. Calero said. "We cannot afford to arm all our men."

If the rebels do not get renewed American aid, and if the Sandinistas begin using new Soviet arms against them, Mr. Calero said, his men could be routed.

In recent interviews, Edgar Chamorro, another rebel leader, said he and some other rebels had grown disenchanted with the Central Intelligence Agency when it was administering the United States aid program. Mr. Chamorro said he was speaking out, contrary to instructions he and others had received from the C.I.A., because he had decided the United States was not going to renew aid to the rebels.

'A Loose Cannon'

Mr. Calero said Mr. Chamorro would be notified this week that he is no longer a member of the rebels' leadership, largely because "he became a loose cannon."

Mr. Calero added that he and the remaining members of the rebel directorate believed that "we can easily serve the purpose of someone who supports us while also serving our own."

"There is a thin line between fighting to establish democracy in Nicaragua and fighting the exporting of revolution to other countries," Mr. Calero said.

"I have absolutely no qualms about our dealings with the Americans," he added. "They have been honest, and our relationship has been rewarding."